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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT
TUESDAY, JANUARY 17, 2006

THIS REPORT PRESENTS THE TURKISH PRESS SUMMARY UNDER THREE
THEMES:

HEADLINES
BRIEFING
EDITORIAL OPINION

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HEADLINES

MASS APPEAL
The Telegraph: Israel Will Strike Iran from Northern Iraq - Sabah
Merkel, Putin to Discuss Iran - Sabah
Israel Blocks HAMAS Election Campaign in Jerusalem - Aksam
Condi Won't Run for US Presidency in 2008 - Hurriyet
Latin America Shifts to Left - Vatan
'Conservative' Chile Picks Socialist Bachelet as President - Hurriyet
Suicide Attacks Kill 25 in Afghanistan - Milliyet
Iran Bans CNN - Hurriyet

OPINION MAKERS
US, EU Troika Submit Iran Issue to UN - Radikal
UN Discusses Iran in London - Cumhuriyet
Putin Pledges Merkel Cooperation against Iran - Zaman
Oil Prices Tehran's Trump Card - Zaman
US Senators Threaten Iran with War - Yeni Safak
Olmert the Interim Leader of Kadima - Cumhuriyet
Walter Cronkite: Time to Pull Out of Iraq - Cumhuriyet
US Oil Companies in Libya Again - Yeni Safak
US Supports Dissident Press in Central Asia - Cumhuriyet
Bachelet the First Woman President in Latin America - Zaman

BRIEFING

Israel Will Use Northern Iraq to Strike Iran: "Hurriyet" reports from Washington that intelligence sources claim the United States and Israel are planning to use air bases in northern Iraq to strike Iran's nuclear facilities. The same sources added that the Iraqi Kurds promised to support Israel during an air operation against Iran. Dailies also report Senator John McCain as expressing support for military action against Iran as a 'last resort.'

Jordanian PM al-Bakhit Visits Turkey: At a joint press conference with visiting Jordanian PM Maruf al-Bakhit on Monday (1/16), PM Erdogan said it was Iran's natural right to continue nuclear activities for peaceful purposes. 'However, if the program's aim is weapons of mass destruction, it is not possible to support Tehran's nuclear program,' Erdogan stressed, adding that Turkey has always advised Iran to cooperate with the IAEA. Erdogan also urged Iran to reestablish 'transparent' cooperation with the EU countries. Al-Bakhit said he discussed the Middle East peace process and Iraq, and the health condition of the Israeli PM Sharon with Erdogan. Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) said on Saturday that Turkey hoped Iran would have 'full and transparent' cooperation with the EU-troika Germany, Britain and France, and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

PM al-Bakhit denied press reports claiming that some members of the of the fugitive Turkish Uzan family are living in Jordan, saying that the Jordanian passports of businessmen Kemal Uzan and Hakan Uzan had been annulled last year.

Turkey to Buy Air Defense Missiles: Saturday's (1/14)

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"Vatan" says that Turkey, in the face of rising tensions between the US and Iran, has been planning to purchase Patriot, Russian S-300, or Israeli Arrow-2 missiles to develop its air defense systems. The cost of the project is estimated as 1 billion USD. Turkey is also planning to have 48 of its F-4 fighter-jets modernized, says the paper.

New NATO Radar to Monitor Middle East from Turkey: Tuesday "Cumhuriyet" claims that a NATO radar facility had been set up in Turkey's southern province of Hatay in the first half of 2005 to monitor the Middle East, especially Syria and Iran. The radar system is under the command of the Incirlik Airbase. The main opposition CHP lawmaker from Hatay, Fuat Cay, said that the radar station began operations last year. 'Most of the authorities are unaware of the installation. It does not belong to the Turkish military. If it had been built for NATO, it should have been established openly, not secretly,' Cay said. Former Hatay governor Abdulkadir Sari

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sai the radar was built by NATO. 'Turkey is a member of NATO, and we have NATO facilities in Turkey. The radar in Hatay will be used by NATO,' Sari told "Cumhuriyet."

Ambassador Wilson Discusses Bird Flu Crisis with Agriculture Minister: US Ambassador to Turkey Ross Wilson said on Friday (1/13) after meeting with Agriculture Minister Mehdi Eker that the US appreciated Turkey for its transparency and cooperation with World Health Organization (WHO) and UN Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) over the outbreak of bird flu in various provinces, weekend papers report. Wilson told reporters after the meeting that the US, an ally and friend of Turkey, was ready to help in all means regarding the matter. Replying to a question, Wilson stressed that the US did not warn its nationals against traveling to Turkey. Minister Eker noted that 764,000 birds have been culled so far to halt the spread of avian flu, and that the disease had been spotted in 26 provinces across Turkey. The AKP government has set up a committee to help the 3 billion USD Turkish poultry sector. A US team of animal and human health experts will join experts already on hand from the World Health Organization (WHO), the US

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the FAO in Turkey this week to discuss with Treasury officials measures for supporting poultry producers.

Agca Released from Prison: Mehmet Ali Agca, the man who attempted to kill Pope John Paul II in 1981 and who killed a Turkish newspaper editor, was freed from prison last week. Turkish judicial authorities told the press that Agca should spend another 20 years in jail. They noted that Agca is being protected, and called for an overhaul of Turkey's entire legal system. Agca wrote a letter to the head of the Turkish intelligence agency MIT, in which the terrorist said that if freed, he would capture Osama bin-Ladin in Afghanistan, today's "Hurriyet" reports.

Alpogan Due to Visit US: Turkish National Security Council (NSC) Secretary-General Yigit Alpogan is expected to travel to Washington on January 22 as the official guest of NSA Stephen Hadley, Turkish papers report on Tuesday. Alpogan is scheduled to meet with Secretary Rice and Hadley on January 23, and later with Deputy Secretary of Defense Eric Edelman, say papers.

New Parties May Enter Parliament If Elections Were Held Today: Four political parties will pass the 10 percent threshold to enter parliament if elections were held today - the ruling AK Party, the main opposition CHP, the center-right DYP and the extreme nationalist MHP, according to a public opinion survey carried by "Vatan." The distribution

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of votes are as follows: AKP 29.9 percent, CHP 14.4, DYP 13.6, MHP 11.5, ANAP 6.5, and DTP 2.5. AKP has lost votes due to tensions at the EU and Cyprus, growing nationalist sentiments, debates regarding alcohol bans, and headscarf controversy. MHP is competing with DYP to win nationalist votes, "Vatan" says.

Iraq Owes Turkey 1 Billion USD Over Oil Products Imports: State Minister Kursad Tuzmen said on Monday (1/16) that Baghdad owed Turkish companies 1 billion USD for exports of oil products to Iraq. 'If Iraq does not pay, Turkish companies will stop exporting oil products to Iraq as of 21 January,' Tuzmen warned.

Al-Qaida Suspect Turk Captured in Spain: Weekend papers report that Saffet Karakocak, a Turkish al-Qaida leader responsible for recruiting across Europe suicide bombers for Iraq, was captured in Madrid earlier last week. Karakocak has been living in Spain for over five years. The Spanish police announced that they also caught a Moroccan cell leader named Omer Nakca. Nakca is being accused of assisting the al-Qaida terrorists in the bombings of March 11, 2004 in Madrid that claimed 191 lives.

Turkish Truck Driver Killed by US Troops in Mosul: "Hurriyet" reported on January 11 that Turkish truck driver Seyhmus Ilan was killed in Mosul by US troops on March 18 last year. A letter to Ilan's family from US Captain Andrew S. Lunoff said that the truck driver was killed accidentally after failing to stop despite warnings. Seyhmus Ilan, aged 27 and father of three, was ferrying sand from Turkey's southeastern province of Mardin for the airport construction in Mosul. Captain Lunoff said in the letter that Ilan could not be identified, and was cremated. Ilan's relatives, who met with four US military officers in Mosul last year, said they turned down 7,500 USD the Americans had offered them as commiseration money. They later filed a lawsuit against the US military at a court in Mardin, "Hurriyet" said.

Police Detain PKK Members, Seize Plastic Explosives: Police seized 23 kilograms of A-4 type explosives in Turkey's eastern city of Van, papers report. Three alleged PKK members were detained in the operation. Police also detained two suspects with 20 kg of plastic explosives in the Aegean city of Izmir on Monday.

EDITORIAL OPINION: Iran

"Neighborly Advice to Iran"

Sami Kohen commented in the mainstream daily "Milliyet" (1/17): "Turkey is one of the countries most affected by the Iranian crisis. As a high level Foreign Ministry official stated 'this issue will cause Turkey many problems no matter which way it goes.' Ankara's concern is centered on two issues; first, the serious political and economic impact on the world of Iran's insistence on continuing its nuclear program despite global pressure, and, second, the regional destabilization that would result if Iran does produce nuclear weapons. If the issue is taken to the UN Security Council and if the UN decides to apply economic sanctions against Iran over the objections of Russia and China, the decision would create a new oil crisis. Such an embargo will leave Turkey in a very difficult position because Turkey's foreign trade with Iran reaches up to \$4 billion. At this point, the possibility of military action against Iran seems rather low. Nevertheless, this possibility is already causing serious concern in Ankara. Naturally, Turkish officials will not tell the UN to let

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Iran continue with its nuclear program but will support a diplomatic solution. Turkey believes that it is mainly Iran's responsibility to resolve the crisis through diplomacy. In fact, just a few days ago, Turkish Foreign Minister Gul advised his Iranian counterpart over the phone not to stop the dialog with the UN and try hard to reach an agreement. It remains to be seen how seriously Iran will take this neighborly advice."

"Is US Failure in Iraq Going to Present a Sample in Iran" Cunevt Ulsever wrote in the mass appeal "Hurriyet" (1/17): "It is a fact that the US failed in its efforts to bring peace and stability to Iraq. Iran is very happy with the chaos the US faces in Iraq, but it is silly to think that the problems the US faces in Iraq are going to change US Iran policy. The failure in Iraq has only caused the US to postpone its Iran operation. I still insist that Bush will sort out the Iran issue before his second term ends. It is not possible for the US to allow a regime in the Middle East which controls 64 percent of the world's oil to survive against its will. And, regardless of the identity of the US President, this fact will never change until the US suffers a military defeat from another country."

WILSON